

Project description (English)

The project *New Paths to the Past. Literary Cultural Heritage as Source Material for the Humanities and Social Sciences* (*Nya vägar till det förflutna. Det litterära kulturarvet som källmaterial för humaniora och samhällsvetenskap*) is run by The Swedish Literature Bank ([Litteraturbanken](#)) and financed by [Riksbankens Jubileumsfond](#). The project runs for three years, 2020–2022. Below follows the project description from the research application.

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Project description: Aim

Internationally, the development of resources, tools and approaches for text mining has been rapid. However, the use of digitized texts in Swedish Humanities research has so far been mostly limited to linguistic interests, focusing on how language is constructed rather than exploring its vast contents. Within Swedish Social Sciences, tools for analyzing content have been more systematically explored, but mainly applied onto modern, digitally born, material. For exploring the Swedish literary heritage and re-reading history in innovative ways, there is one major impediment: no systematic digitization of books on any scale has yet been performed in Sweden.

Swedish literary heritage 1800–1900 holds large promises for use within a wide range of disciplines, not only within the Humanities but also the Social Sciences. It reflects a century of intense cultural and societal change, and constitutes a remarkable foundation for analyzing change and development in a number of areas. It also promises to be the venue of intense and sophisticated interdisciplinary collaboration and development of methods, technologies and research paradigms, not least within the area of combining quantitative and qualitative methods. These statements are corroborated by the development that has characterized the field internationally. Sweden risks lagging behind this international development. However, with a focused effort of this kind, Sweden has the opportunity to take an important part in the international development and make a considerable contribution.

The aim of this project is to make a significant part of the Swedish past accessible to new kinds of research. Within the project, the bulk of Swedish literary works published separately 1800–1900 will be made available both to researchers and to the general public, together with tools for exploring the material. The intention is to pave the way for reading Swedish history anew and make Swedish research a vital part of the intense international development within Computational Humanities and Social Sciences. The potential for methodological development and exchange over the borders of disciplines as well as nations is extraordinary. The Swedish Literature Bank

(LB) is a well-established portal for Swedish literary heritage. It supplies researchers, libraries and the community with, at present, close to 4 000 books for free use and a number of presentations and introductions. It also supplies teachers on all levels with material, introductions and exercises for their students. Literary texts provide an extremely valuable source for analysis of the past, enabling not only literary and linguistic analysis but also investigations of ideology, society, notions of identity, nationality, gender and minorities, to mention only some aspects. They also provide the perfect source for the processes of cultural heritage: how the past has been used and exploited for different needs at different times.

Uppsala University Library's (UUL) Alvin (alvin-portal.org) is a well-established portal for cultural heritage material, which presents material in a way more directed toward book history than LB. As UUL is the source of material for this project, all books will be made available in Alvin as well as in LB.

The materials produced within this project will profit already established or planned collaborations with a number of research environments, to a great extent through the partnership between LB and the Centre for Digital Humanities at the University of Gothenburg (CDHUGOT; <http://cdh.hum.gu.se>). These collaborations include the Swedish Language Bank which provides LB:s infrastructure (<http://spraakbanken.gu.se>), SWE-CLARIN (<http://sweclarin.se>), Humlab in Umeå (<http://umu.se/humlab>), the networks for Digital Humanities in Uppsala and in Stockholm, and the Institute for Analytical Sociology, Linköping University (<https://liu.se/organisation/liu/iei/ias>), which currently runs the Swedish Research Council project "Mining for Meaning", aimed at tracing discourses on migration and integration in modern Sweden. Through the 19th century literary heritage, it will be possible to broaden the scope of "Mining for Meaning" onto later material and establish significant interaction as regards research questions and methods over the borders of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Another domestic collaboration of significance is the Royal Library, which has digitized a great amount of 19th century newspapers, a corpus that is ideal to place in parallel with the literary works. The planned laboratory of the Royal Library is expected to be a significant partner in the development of tools and approaches for future research.

The material will not be limited to collaborating projects, but freely available for download. All materials are downloadable from UUL:s Alvin, and LB is developing a web page where anyone can choose among all non-restricted texts according to a number of parameters such as author, genre, time period.

Apart from providing research with entirely new venues, the project will also improve community's access to the common past. One of the great challenges

in the digital age is the imbalance between knowledge, opinions and reliable sources. Not only will all books be possible to find and read; they will also be suggested when searches are made with common search engines such as Google, providing community with new paths to the past.